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**STRATEGIC ANALYSIS  
ANWAR SADAT AND THE 1973 OCTOBER WAR**

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## INTRODUCTION

As Sun Tzu said, “[W]hat is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy’s strategy. Next best is to disrupt his alliances. The next best is to attack his armies. The worst policy is to attack cities. Attack cities only when there is no alternative.”<sup>1</sup> While it is unknown whether Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat or his advisors read Sun Tzu, the national security policy that Sadat adopted leading up to the 1973 Yom Kippur War with Israel (or Ramadan War as it is called by the Arabs) clearly followed this prescription. As the following discussion will show, Sadat, after carefully considering what he felt were Egypt’s national interests – territorial and psychological security, economic prosperity, and the survival of the regime – developed a comprehensive strategy that attempted to make use of all of the instruments of power at his disposal to advance those interests.

Faced with significant political, economic and military constraints on his actions, President Sadat first attempted to work with the tools of diplomacy. After the failure of diplomacy alone to resolve the stalemate between Israel and Egypt, he determined that military action was required to achieve perceived national interests through diplomacy. In his mind, he knew that there would be no resolution of the impasse that he felt was strangling his country and his regime, without war. An analysis of his military means, however, also led to the inescapable conclusion that he could not achieve a total military victory (i.e. recapturing all lost territory and destruction of Israeli military). Thus, he

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<sup>1</sup> Sun Tzu, The Art of War, Translated by Samuel B. Griffith (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 78.

adopted a strategy of using military action to achieve a political solution for Egypt. Sadat fought a war not to acquire all territory via war, but to gain limited territory and increased political clout to allow him the freedom to create a viable peace following the war. It was a war with limited military objectives fought to lay the basis for restored Egyptian national well being in its aftermath.<sup>2</sup> As events have shown, it was a highly effective strategy that substantially achieved the national security goals that Sadat set for Egypt.

## DISCUSSION

To develop an understanding and appreciation for Sadat's national security strategy, it is imperative to review: his perceived national interests and the threats to those interests; the motivations and constraints on Egyptian actions, the objectives and the power and resources available to him, and the plans used to relate the objectives to the available instruments of power. In reviewing the national security strategy of Anwar el-Sadat that culminated in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, it is clear that he carefully thought through this matrix of ends, means, ways, costs and risks, and that the constraints on his available options to achieve Egypt's national interests required the use of the military instrument of power. When military action was initiated in October 1973, Egypt had exhausted all of the available diplomatic and political avenues to achieve its national interests, which were severely constrained by the international and domestic environments. Effective economic options were not apparent as Egypt's economy was in a desperate low. Consequently, the military action was chosen to help Egypt achieve its desired national interests of survival and prosperity.

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<sup>2</sup> Henry Kissinger, "Why We Were Surprised." Years of Upheaval (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982), p.460.

The decision to use the military option was made in November 1972 when President Sadat concluded that Egypt could never escape from the stagnated state of no war, no peace without resorting to armed force. It was considered a last resort to persuade Israel to make peace with Egypt.<sup>3</sup> A review of the situation existing at the time, both domestically in Egypt and in the international community, confirms Sadat's analysis that military action was the only available option likely to produce the desired results.

In order to comprehend the domestic and international constraints and limitations on the power and resources available to accomplish Sadat's national security strategy from his ascension to the Egyptian Presidency in 1970 until the 1973 Yom Kippur War, it is necessary to first briefly review the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and its aftermath. The results of the 1967 war and the international and domestic situation facing Egypt in its aftermath laid the foundation and set the parameters for Sadat's subsequent strategy development. The domestic and international situation in which he found himself created significant constraints on his available options, leading him toward the path of military action.

On June 5, 1967, Israel launched a strike against Arab forces in Egypt, Syria and Jordan. By June 11, six days after the war had started, the Arab defeat was total. Israel held all of historic Palestine, including the entire city of Jerusalem, the West Bank of the Jordan River, the Gaza Strip, the Sinai and a large part of the Golan Heights. Egyptian losses totaled approximately 10,000 soldiers and 1,500 officers killed and 5,000 soldiers and 500 officers captured. In addition, eighty percent of its military equipment was destroyed. On top of the territorial losses, the Arabs suffered a profound psychological

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<sup>3</sup> Hassan El Badri, Taha Magdoub, and Mohammed Dia El Din Zohdy, "Decision and Concept," The Ramadan War, 1973 (Dunn Loring, Va: T.N. Dupuy Associates, Inc., 1978), p. 15.

setback in that they felt that they had been humiliated and dishonored.<sup>4</sup> This psychological aspect, perhaps even more than the territorial losses, would act as a significant determinant on Sadat's freedom of movement as he tried to resolve the impasse later.

Despite these losses, or perhaps because of them and the psychological issue, Gamal Nasser, the Egyptian President at that time, set out on a course to continue the war against Israel, although this time as a war of attrition. To finance the war of attrition, Nasser entered into a number of treaties with the Soviet Union, ending almost all contact with the West. The Soviet Union became Egypt's major trading partner and almost all other trade was with Arab neighbors. The Arab countries also supported Egypt to some extent by paying compensation for lost Suez Canal revenues to Egypt. The net result of this situation was that Egyptian options were significantly limited. Egypt was totally reliant on the good will of its Arab neighbors and the Soviets and had to consider their desires and position before taking any action to secure its own national interests.

Shortly after the end of the 1967 war, the United Nations, by unanimous Security Council vote, passed UN Resolution 242. This resolution called on Israel to withdraw from all territories occupied in the recent conflict, for a termination of the state of belligerency and the right of all states in the area "to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries." In addition, freedom of navigation through international waterways was to be guaranteed and a just settlement of the refugee problem was to be obtained. Although Egypt eventually agreed to accept the resolution if Israel agreed to evacuate all occupied areas, no agreement was reached. Israel rejected the resolution as

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<sup>4</sup>Ed. Helen Chapin Metz, Egypt, a Country Study, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. (Washington: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1991), p.69.

meaningless without negotiations with the individual belligerents, and, more importantly for Egypt, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) rejected the resolution because it felt it dismissed Palestinian demands for self-determination and national rights, and Syria rejected it as a sellout of the PLO.<sup>5</sup> The other Arab countries had already made their position clear at the Arab Summit in September 1967 when they agreed that there would be no negotiations with Israel, no recognition of Israel and no settlement with Israel.<sup>6</sup> Just for agreeing to accept the resolution, which in fact would have returned the situation to the status quo ante, Nasser, who had led the fight against Israel for years, lost significant prestige in the Arab world.

When Sadat took office after Nasser's death in late September 1970, the international and domestic situation continued to deteriorate from the Egyptian point of view and further limited his national security options. He initially faced Soviet opposition to his leadership of Egypt and internal political opposition eventually led to a coup attempt. Although he was successful in thwarting these attacks, he remained under internal pressure from Egyptian "hawks" throughout his presidency. The Egyptian economy continued to crumble and the international situation became less favorable to Egypt. In addition, the psychological aspects of the loss of the 1967 war continued to cause Egypt to suffer. Honor and dignity have a special place in the Arab culture. The debacle of 1967 had become a source of deep humiliation and shame that had to be redressed. Decisive action was called for to establish some popular support for the Sadat regime.<sup>7</sup> This action would have to both redress this humiliation and also meet the

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<sup>5</sup> Metz, Supra., pp. 71-72.

<sup>6</sup> Bard E. O'Neill, "The October War: A Political-Military Assessment," Air University Review, Vol. 25, No. 5 (July-August, 1974), p.28.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.32.

desires of his Arab benefactors, who took absolute hard line positions against Israel, and the Soviet Union, who opposed further war due to the risk of undermining its diplomatic relations with the U.S. These weighty, lingering effects from the 1967 defeat provided a filter through which all of Egypt viewed its most basic national security interests of security and prosperity. As a result, the primary political objective that coalesced for Sadat was to take decisive action to break the status quo relationship with Israel. Continuing on as a state whose identity was dominated by its defeat by Israel was unacceptable. This objective was further reinforced by domestic and international constraints which served to both strengthen the need to disrupt the status quo and place limits on the means by which Egypt could achieve this objective.

The Egyptian economy severely constrained Sadat's available options. The economy continued to reel from the 1967 war, the war of attrition with Israel, the military buildup, and the continued closure of the Suez Canal. While Egypt had been self-sufficient in most food products in 1960, by 1972-73 it could not feed its citizens without outside help.<sup>8</sup> Sadat realized that the only way that he could solve these pressing economic problems was by encouraging Western investment. He knew, however, that Western investment would not be forthcoming until the climate became more favorable to Western capitalism--namely the establishment of peace between Egypt and Israel and the elimination of Soviet influence.<sup>9</sup> The question was how to do this given the domestic constraints on his actions. The diplomatic position of the Israeli leadership, supported by the United States, was incapable of being reconciled with the Arab demand (and Egyptian

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<sup>8</sup> Metz, Supra, p.181.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.76

need) that all of the occupied territories be returned.<sup>10</sup> The settlement alternatives available immediately from Israel, which would not include the return of all of the occupied territories, was insupportable by the Egyptian people, as long as it seemed to flow from weakness.<sup>11</sup>

Although Sadat felt war was inevitable, he still attempted to reach a diplomatic settlement, but on the terms he felt constrained to seek. In 1971 he proposed an interim agreement with Israel in return for a partial Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai. A timetable would then be set for Israeli withdrawal from the rest of the occupied territories in accordance with UN Resolution 242. Egypt would reopen the canal, restore diplomatic relations with the United States and sign a peace agreement with Israel through the United Nations. Israel rejected the proposal, not being willing to give up all of the occupied territories, and feeling that it was in a superior military position which alleviated the concern that Egypt would resort to military action. The United States supported Israel in its rejection, as it was not willing to assist a major client of the Soviet Union.<sup>12</sup>

By the beginning of 1972, domestic pressure and the diplomatic stalemate with Israel threatened to destabilize Sadat's regime. Egypt had been on a war footing since June 1967 with nothing to show for it, and this caused great resentment among the Egyptian people. Student riots broke out around the country and the students began to get the backing of the Egyptian elite. It was at this point that Sadat made the decision to proceed with war. He knew that his regime could not survive, nor could Egypt, in the stagnation of no war, no peace. While Sadat began real preparations for war, however,

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<sup>10</sup> O'Neill, Supra., p.30.

<sup>11</sup> Kissinger, Supra., p. 460.

he again tried to implement a peace plan, using the change in administrations in the United States to begin talks with Henry Kissinger. It was the meetings in Paris in February 1973 between Kissinger and Hafiz Asmail, the Egyptian National Security Advisor, that crystallized in Sadat the necessity of war. Sadat reported to his political and military leadership that Kissinger clearly stated that the United States could not assist Egypt in obtaining the type of settlement Sadat felt he needed, based on the constraints under which he was operating, without a change in conditions. According to Sadat, Kissinger's advice was:

My advice to Sadat is to be realistic. We live in a world of facts and we can't build on hopes and fantasy. The fact is that you have been defeated so don't ask for a victor's spoils. There have to be concessions on your part so America can help you...How is it possible, in your defeat, to impose conditions on the other party? Either you can change the facts and consequently our perceptions will naturally change with regard to a solution or you can't change the facts, in which case solutions other than the ones you are offering will have to be found to suit your circumstances.<sup>13</sup>

Kissinger, ever the realist, made it clear. Accept what the Israelis offer, which Sadat could not do and remain in power, or change the facts on the ground. As domestic and international pressure made it impossible for Sadat to accept the Israeli offer and remain in power, a war became necessary to change the facts on the ground. To remain in power and make the changes he perceived necessary for Egypt and accomplish its political objective of security and prosperity, military force was the only option.

Even while fully preparing for the military action, however, Sadat did not ignore the diplomatic tools of statecraft. Egypt would need help from its allies if it was going to

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<sup>12</sup>Metz, Supra., p. 77.

<sup>13</sup> Mohammed Abdel Ghani El-Gamasy. The October War (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1993) p. 176.

exert the necessary pressure on Israel and the world to arrive at a political solution after the fighting ended. He acted to strengthen his relations with Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Syria, which had undergone strains as a result of his diplomatic efforts to obtain a peace agreement. He also worked to solidify Arab solidarity and bring the oil weapon to bear in the future, and to obtain the support of the non-aligned nations, especially those in Africa.<sup>14</sup> These efforts, which did bring the oil weapon to bear and created allies at the United Nations, were responsible for helping to create a climate for settlement after the war, as Sadat wanted.

The Constitution of Egypt, in discussing its military forces, identifies the defense of the homeland as a "sacred duty".<sup>15</sup> In this case, Anwar Sadat felt compelled by domestic and international pressures, to turn to the Egyptian military instrument to confront Israel, regain occupied territory and break the stalemate that threatened Egypt's survival. While the military option was on the one hand a last resort for Egypt, on the other hand, it seemed almost inevitable to Sadat all along. The unpalatable political and cultural consequences left from defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, coupled with the unacceptable stagnation of domestic and international affairs in the early '70's and ineffectiveness or unavailability of other instruments, made the final decision to proceed with the military operation a relatively clear one. As Sadat put it to his military commanders in a 1 October 1973 presidential directive ordering the war:

. . . Egypt has been aware [since 1968] that the time would come when it would have to take its responsibilities in hand and that the most important task was to be ready for that day . . . when it was in our power to defend our land and honor.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> O'Neill, *Supra.*, p. 31.

<sup>15</sup> Metz. *Supra.*, p. 305.

<sup>16</sup> El-Gamasy, *Supra.*, pp.187-188.

The military option offered clear and direct advantages over other alternatives already tried without sufficient result and those not otherwise available to achieve political goals. It promised to answer directly the internal and external questions of Egyptian pride, determination and strength dealt such a vital blow by the 1967 defeat at the hands of Israel. It would address directly the issue of Israeli control of the occupied territories lost in the 1967 conflict. And it would confront the stagnation caused by both the regional military control by the Israelis as well as by the international (predominantly US and USSR) desire to maintain the political status quo in the Middle East.

Having finally chosen war with Israel. President Sadat personally authored the primary objectives for the Egyptian armed forces operation.

- End the existing military inertia by breaking the cease-fire with Israel and challenging the Israeli national security theory (which was based on the concepts of secure borders, maintenance of the initiative and the power of deterrence).<sup>17</sup>
- Inflict the greatest losses possible on the Israeli armed forces to persuade Israel that continued occupation of Egyptian territories would require too great a cost.
- Liberate those occupied territories in progressive stages according to the capabilities of the armed forces.<sup>18</sup>

While these objectives were wholly Egypt's, Anwar Sadat's regional diplomatic efforts to shore up Arab unity and support yielded the complete partnership of Syria in carrying out a military operation to achieve them. This combined operation was code named Operation Badr.

President Sadat was very deliberate in leading the preparation for this war. These preparations included thorough study of the enemy's capabilities and weaknesses in relation to those of the Egyptian forces prior to crafting the military strategy for

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<sup>17</sup> El Badri, et. al., Supra., p. 19.

<sup>18</sup> El-Gamasy, Supra., pp. 189 & 191.

Operation Badr. Israel had several strengths militarily, not the least of which was air superiority. Its armed forces also benefited from a number of other positive aspects, including: its tenacity and spirit of survival, its grasp of technological and professional skills, its training and mobilization systems, and the responsive and sizable financial and technological backing of the United States.<sup>19</sup>

Sadat and the Egyptian planners did, however, highlight several Israeli characteristics that they believed made Israel vulnerable. These included: lengthy and multiple borders (which made concentration of force difficult), long interior lines of communication to get to some of these frontiers (i.e. the Sinai), limited population and economic capacity (making it difficult to withstand a protracted conflict), and consensus amongst Egyptian political and military leaders that Israel's confidence regarding its superior might and posture to Egypt's was inflated to the point of conceit (which made it easy to predict Israeli perceptions and reactions as well as catch Israel off guard).<sup>20</sup>

Egypt also possessed several advantages. These included the will and determination to fight, an impressive air defense cover over the Canal zone area, and recently strengthened Arab unity, which Israel would likely discount. It also possessed the numerical superiority of its armed forces prior to such time as Israel mobilized its reserve forces. Egypt forces numbered approximately 300,000, where the Israeli Defense Force had only 80,000 permanent troops which grew to 300,000 only upon total

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<sup>19</sup> Major General A. H. Farrar-Hockley, "The October War," in the Arab-Israeli War, October 1973: Background and Events, Adelphi Paper #111 (London: International Institute of Strategic Studies IISS, Winter 1974-75), p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> El Badri, et. al., *Supra.*, p. 19.

mobilization. This particular advantage favored a bold, offensive operation that took advantage of the element of surprise.<sup>21</sup>

Concerning the nature of war to be employed, there was never much thought of the operation being anything other than a limited war. Israel's air superiority and the geographical limits of Egypt's air defense system made extension beyond this air cover too costly. This reality coupled with Egypt's resource limitations (crippled economy, meager food supply, etc.) ruled out revival of the War of Attrition following the 1967 conflict.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, annihilation of Israel's military was not the goal sought by Sadat. It was only required to deal a significant enough military blow to disrupt the status quo and persuade Israel that the status quo occupation was not worth continuing.

Based on the previously discussed comparative strengths and weaknesses, Anwar Sadat and General Achmed Ismail, general commander of the Arabic Federal Armed Forces, believed a swift, bold offensive could achieve the political goals had dictated military action. The element of surprise was extremely important to achieve sufficient gains early before Israel could mobilize its reserves. And the force of the attack needed to be decisive enough to make sufficient gains and then display enough staying power to withstand the inevitable Israeli counterattack. The offensive should avoid open, symmetrical warfare, for which Israel was well suited, and instead draw or provoke Israel into "meat grinder" battles to exploit and maintain the Arab advantage.<sup>23</sup>

The joint offensive operation developed to achieve the military objectives (and ultimately lead to realization of the Egyptian political objectives) called for Egypt to engage in a carefully planned assault of infantry and armor across the Suez Canal,

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<sup>21</sup> Farrar-Hockley, Supra., p. 15.

<sup>22</sup> El Badri, et. al.,Supra., p. 17.

capture Israel's Bar-Lev Line of defense, and establish numerous bridgeheads on the canal's east bank. Simultaneously, Syria was to penetrate and destroy Israeli defenses along the Golan Heights. Both attacks were to inflict the heaviest losses possible on Israel's armed forces encountered and gain complete control of enemy defensive concentrations before Israel was able to mount significant counterattack. Arab forces on both fronts were only called to press on beyond these frontiers to the extent allowable by the conflict developments and friendly force capabilities. For Syria, the limit would be the Jordan River and Lake Tiberias if they got that far. For Egypt, it would likely not extend any further beyond the canal bridgeheads than its air defense cover could protect (approximately 30 miles).<sup>24</sup> However, by attacking along the entire front of the Suez Canal and Suez Gulf (approximately 200 miles), and in concert with Syria's assault to Israel's north, it would deprive Israel of the ability to concentrate its air strikes, hinder enemy movement and maneuver along numerous and long internal lines, and add to the confusion of the main direction and objectives of the operation. When joined with the assumed achievement of total surprise, the initial phase of Operation Badr promised to leverage Egyptian-Syrian capabilities, exploit Israel's weaknesses, and achieve the significant and decisive geographic gains and disruptive effects sought to turn the political tide.

The decision to go to war and the strategy by which to prosecute it were not without risk. Israel, in spite of its perceived weaknesses, had been a fierce antagonist in the past and could, if not caught completely by surprise and unprepared, launch a counter attack larger than the initial Egyptian strike, which relied on the significant task of

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<sup>23</sup> Farrar-Hockley, Supra., p. 16.

<sup>24</sup> El Badri, et. al.,Supra., p. 18.

crossing the Suez Canal.<sup>25</sup> However, the risks of not acting seemed much greater. As mentioned, the Egyptian economy was broke and the food supply all but exhausted.<sup>26</sup> Sadat also felt domestic support for his leadership was at a critical point, and potentially eroding due to the unfulfilled promise to take decisive action against Israel. His ally Syrian President Hafez al-Assad was in a similarly precarious political position within his country.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, Sadat had made considerable diplomatic headway in uniting most Arab states in support of his cause. If he didn't act soon, he risked seeing this unity unravel into the more typical fractious relationships that had been the norm.<sup>28</sup> Thus the choice seemed clear--it must be war and it must be now.

Sadat and his military leaders picked 6 October 1973 as the date for the assault. In addition to tactical and climatic reasons, this date was ideally suited to maximize the element of surprise required for success. This day was Yom Kippur (Hebrew Day of Atonement) in Israel, when attention would be focussed on religious observance and all public services would be suspended, to include public television and radio key to Israeli mobilization of its reserves. It was also a time of religious observance in Egypt--the holy week of Ramadan. Outsiders would likely assume that Egypt would be preoccupied with its own religious activities.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, Sadat exploited actions leading up to the operation to increase the deception. His expelling of Soviet advisers, although primarily in retaliation to weak Soviet support and to give Egypt space to prepare for battle, was actually perceived by the Soviets, United States and Israel as a sign that Egypt was not consolidating its

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 15-16.

<sup>26</sup> Anwar Sadat, In Search of Identity (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), p. 244.

<sup>27</sup> O'Neill, Supra., p. 32.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

resources for war.<sup>30</sup> This perception was further reinforced by several diplomatic efforts to seek peace via the U.S. and U.N. And in the months before the assault, the Egyptian military repeatedly engaged in internal operations that caused Israel to undergo two expensive, precautionary mobilizations--making them less likely to perceive the real thing in October as a true threat until the assault began.<sup>31</sup>

Thus did the Arab military launch Operation Badr on 6 October 1973. On the Egyptian front there was the swift air strike across the Suez Canal, followed by massive artillery bombardment of Israel's Bar-Lev line of defenses on the east bank. This set the stage for an impressive canal crossing led by Egyptian engineers, and finally the storming across of Egyptian armor columns.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, the Syrians followed the same pattern to attack the Israeli defensive positions in the Golan Heights--air strike and artillery, followed by mechanized and armored forces.<sup>33</sup>

The Arabs were very successful for the first few days. Capitalizing on almost complete surprise, the Arabs' numerically superior forces at the onset, effectively protected by integrated air defense systems, successfully established bridgeheads on the east bank of the Suez Canal and seized the Golan Heights. However, while solidifying their canal bridgeheads, they lost the initiative. In the inevitable counterattack, Israeli tank columns surprised the Egyptians by bypassing the bridgeheads, crossing the canal and penetrating into the heart of the Egyptian army. This decisive maneuver threatened to cut off a major portion of the Egyptian force before superpower intervention led to a cease fire on 23 October. Likewise, Israel had pushed Syrian forces back out of the

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<sup>29</sup> Sadat, Supra., p. 241.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 230.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 241.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 250.

Golan Heights and half way to Damascus, actually increasing its territorial control in the north. However, the Soviets threatened to intervene to prevent Egyptian defeat, and Sadat eagerly welcomed a U.S.-backed United Nations cease fire.<sup>34</sup>

Ultimately, the Egyptians inflicted painful losses on Israel and were able to claim a qualified victory, having held onto east bank positions. This led to tangible Egyptian territorial gains. Thus the war, limited in scope and military achievement had achieved the purposes for which Sadat had turned to the military option. It enabled Egypt to regain its sense of honor, forced Israel to the bargaining table, gained the serious attention of the international community, and emboldened Egypt to be able to negotiate from a position of strength.

At the conclusion of the fighting, neither side had won a clear-cut victory. For the Egyptians however, the war showed that the Arab military was at least as strong as Israel's. For Sadat in particular, the war boosted his power and influence in the rest of the Arab world and especially in Egypt, where political opposition was completely eliminated.<sup>35</sup> It also created a climate for negotiation in Egypt, Israel and the United States by transforming the psychological basis of negotiations.<sup>36</sup> While finite results were not immediate, within three years after Sadat's dramatic visit to Israel, a peace treaty was signed that gave Egypt back all territory it had lost in the 1967 war and obtained significant American political and military aid, which has continued to today, and peace.

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<sup>33</sup> Farr-Hockley, Supra., p. 22.

<sup>34</sup> O'Neill, Supra., p. 32.

<sup>35</sup> Encyclopedia of the Orient> “Anwar as-Sadat.” [lexorient.com]

<sup>36</sup> Kissinger, Supra., pp. 459-460.

## CONCLUSION

If war is merely a continuation of politics by other means, then the national security strategy adopted and implemented by Anwar el-Sadat in initiating the 1973 Yom Kippur War was a strategic success. It can be argued that Egypt failed to achieve complete military success with its offensive, and if the fighting had lasted a few days longer its army would have been totally annihilated. However, history has shown that Sadat had few options other than military action and that the action accomplished most of his political goals. The ultimate goal of the war, according to the Egyptian military and political leadership, was not to win a total military victory, but to change the balance of political and military power in the Middle East and pave the way for the subsequent use of the remaining aspects Egypt's power. The aim was to convince Israel and the world that Israel's military establishment was not invincible, that its national security strategy of "secure borders" was a myth and that military achievements could not impose peace.<sup>37</sup> This view is supported by Henry Kissinger, who subsequently wrote that "Sadat aimed not for territorial gain but for a crisis that would alter the attitudes into which the parties were then frozen—and thereby open the way for negotiations. The shock would enable *both* sides, including Egypt, to show a flexibility that was impossible while Israel considered itself militarily supreme and Egypt was paralyzed by humiliation. His purpose, in short, was psychological and diplomatic, much more than military."<sup>38</sup>

Sadat's strategy led directly to the peace treaty with Israel, due to the wider freedom of action that resulted from the war. The treaty, in turn, resulted in the return of

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<sup>37</sup> El Badri, et. al., Supra., pp. 16-19.

<sup>38</sup> Kissinger, Supra., p. 460.

all of the Egyptian territory lost in the 1967 war, improved relations with the West, economic aid and investment from the West, particularly the United States, and long term peace, all of which met the political objectives Sadat sought when he initiated the military action. The national security strategy that Sadat adopted leading up to and during the 1973 October War stands as an example of an appropriate and effective national security strategy whose political objectives were based on national interests, and whose means, including the military ones, were employed in ways that respected the real constraints of the domestic and international environment while achieving the desired national end state.